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## The Cuban Revolution: Fall of Machado

BY CHARLES A. THOMSON

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# The Cuban Revolution: Fall of Machado

BY CHARLES A. THOMSON

*with the aid of the Research Staff of the Foreign Policy Association*

ON December 11 Colonel Carlos Mendieta resigned as Provisional President of Cuba. He was succeeded by Secretary of State José A. Barnet, who on the following day was confirmed in office by the joint vote of the cabinet and the Council of State. President Mendieta's resignation followed failure to conciliate all parties prior to the holding of general elections on January 10, 1936. These had recently been postponed for the fourth time. A disputed ruling of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal led to fierce political strife, and finally the powerful Democratic party of General Mario Menocal refused to take part in the projected poll unless President Mendieta resigned. This threat has now been withdrawn, but political discontent continues and it is doubted whether the elections, if held, will be at all effective in ending the revolutionary disorder and social unrest which have dominated the island for more than two years.

At the inauguration of President Roosevelt in March 1933, Cuba represented the administration's most acute problem in foreign relations. No other country is so closely linked to the United States by geographical position, as well as by political and economic ties. But continued political terrorism and a state of economic prostration had created an alarming situation in the island, which jeopardized the execution of at least two important Washington policies. In the first place, Cuban conditions constituted a potential threat to the "good neighbor" program. The Roosevelt administration was determined to avoid further intervention in Latin America, particularly in view of the approaching Pan-American Conference at Montevideo. Yet Cuba's chronic discontent, endangering the lives and property of United States citizens, raised the question whether demands for intervention could be long resisted.<sup>1</sup>

In the second place, the continuance of Cuban disorder would have handicapped the administra-

tion's intention to revive export trade as one remedy for the depression. In 1924 Cuba had been the sixth best customer of the United States, absorbing \$192,000,000 of American exports. In subsequent years shipments declined to \$23,000,000 for 1929. Cuban economic recovery promised not only to restore an important foreign market, but also to benefit United States investments, whose book value in the island was estimated at more than \$1,100,000,000.<sup>2</sup>

How then might Washington promote the re-establishment of political tranquillity and economic prosperity in Cuba? Could these aims be achieved while President Machado remained in power? If not, could his withdrawal be effected without employing such open pressure as to violate international proprieties, offend the pride of Cuba and other Latin American countries, and create an embarrassing precedent for the future?

The first part of this report will trace the course followed by the United States with relation to these problems, discussing the fall of Machado and the brief rule of Céspedes. The second part, which will be published in a succeeding number of *Foreign Policy Reports*, will describe how subsequent developments in the Cuban revolution—attempts at reform under Grau and the trend toward reaction under Mendieta—affected and were in turn affected by Washington's policy. Finally, the events which

1. For the background of this situation as it had developed under the Machado régime, cf. Raymond Leslie Buell, "Cuba and the Platt Amendment," *Foreign Policy Association, Information Service*, April 17, 1929, and "The Caribbean Situation: Cuba and Haiti," *Foreign Policy Reports*, June 21, 1933.

2. For data on foreign investments in Cuba, cf. L. H. Jenks, *Our Cuban Colony* (New York, Vanguard, 1928), pp. 281-302; Max Winkler, *Investments of U. S. Capital in Latin America* (Boston, World Peace Foundation, 1929), pp. 183 ff; and P. D. Dickens, "A New Estimate of American Investments Abroad," *Trade Information Bulletin*, No. 767 (Washington, U. S. Department of Commerce, 1931), p. 165.

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have led to Cuba's latest crisis and the resignation of President Mendieta will be reviewed.

## MEDIATION AND MACHADO'S FALL

The arrival in Havana on May 7, 1933 of United States Ambassador Sumner Welles formally initiated the new Cuban policy of the Roosevelt administration. Mr. Welles had resigned his position of Assistant Secretary of State in charge of Latin American affairs to accept the Cuban post. Ostensibly the sole concern of the new envoy was the improvement of economic relations between Cuba and the United States. He was expected to assist in the negotiation of a new reciprocity treaty which would assure a market in this country for a definite amount of Cuban sugar, thus stabilizing the economic life of the island. In addition, however, the new Ambassador had been instructed to tender his good offices to effect political peace and end the alarming state of terrorism.<sup>3</sup> On May 11 Mr. Welles presented his credentials to General Machado, and at the conclusion of the ceremonies handed to the Cuban President a personal letter from President Roosevelt in which the latter, referring to Mr. Welles, said: "I want you to know that he is one of my very old friends, and as such has my confidence."<sup>4</sup>

The Ambassador promptly opened conversations regarding a commercial agreement with a government commission headed by Dr. Orestes Ferrara, Secretary of State; according to the latter, "the treaty of commercial reciprocity . . . virtually was completed, as far as the requests of Cuba were concerned, in three sessions . . ."<sup>5</sup> Although no reference was made at these meetings to the question of domestic strife, conversations on that point were soon to begin, since the Ambassador believed that "no correction of economic conditions could be made effective so long as the political problem remained unsolved."<sup>6</sup> On June first Mr. Welles presented to President Machado an offer to employ his good offices as mediator in the acute conflict between the government and the Opposition. This

offer was accepted, and at the same time the government initiated a series of steps to lessen political tension.<sup>7</sup>

Following President Machado's acceptance of the mediation offer, Mr. Welles sought the cooperation of Opposition groups. In his discussions with them he indicated that this offer did not imply the advocacy by Washington of any definite *a priori* program for the solution of Cuba's internal political difficulties; but it was hoped that it would afford the Cubans an opportunity to create a new political alignment by means of constructive discussion rather than repression and terrorism. On June 10 Mr. Welles met with representatives of the ABC secret society; five days later this group accepted his invitation to take part in the mediation and pledged itself to suspend terroristic activities, reserving, however, the right to withdraw from the mediation if political reorganization were too long delayed.

The memorandum presented to the Ambassador by the ABC declared that Machado's resignation was not desirable as a solution of the political problem, since such a step would necessitate elections within 60 days, a period insufficient for the reorganization of existing parties and the formation of new ones. Instead, the memorandum suggested that the President apply for an indefinite leave of absence, which would permit power to pass to a neutral Secretary of State who could preside over the November 1934 elections and afford the necessary guarantees to all parties. The memorandum also requested the liberation of political prisoners and freedom for political exiles to return to the country.<sup>8</sup>

The acceptance of Welles' mediation by both the government and the ABC, an organization then endowed with great prestige, was interpreted as a favorable portent for the success of the Ambassador's efforts. Other leading Opposition groups, including the University professors and the OCRR secret society, promptly pledged their support. On June 27 it was announced that two important political factions, the *Unión Nacionalista* and the *Marianistas* (followers of Miguel Mariano Gómez, former mayor of Havana), would participate in the negotiations.

Two significant groups, however, remained aloof: the Conservative followers of former President Mario Menocal, and the University Student Directorate, with whom the ABC had shared dy-

3. State Department, *Press Releases*, April 29, 1933, p. 280; and Sumner Welles, *Relations between the United States and Cuba*, State Department, Latin American Series, No. 7 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1934).

4. For a reference to the importance accorded this letter in Cuba, cf. Alberto Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo Cayó el Presidente Machado* (Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1934), p. 66. Its author served as newspaper censor under the Machado régime.

5. Orestes Ferrara, "How U. S. Used Stacked Cards in Giving New Deal to Cuba," *Philadelphia Sunday News*, April 7, 1935, p. 14.

6. Welles, *Relations between the United States and Cuba*, cited, p. 7.

7. Cf. Buell, "The Caribbean Situation: Cuba and Haiti," cited, pp. 82, 83.

8. *El ABC en la Mediación, Compilación, notas e introducción por Emeterio S. Santovenia* (Havana, 1934), pp. 31-34.

namic leadership of the anti-Machado movement.<sup>9</sup> The labor movement, in addition, was hostile. On July 5 General Menocal, in exile in Miami, broke an extended silence to attack the mediation. He declared that it had led to the dissolution of the Junta of revolutionary factions functioning in New York, thus destroying the unity of the Machado opposition. He also criticized the attempt to carry out mediation on the basis of the 1928 constitution, which the Opposition considered illegal. It was impossible, he stated, for the Machado régime to "give life" to a succeeding government "without branding it with its own vices."<sup>10</sup> On July 15 members of the University Student Directorate in Miami attacked the Welles mediation because it "tacitly implies an intervention and is backed by the coercive power of the American government." Declaring that the student movement was directed not only toward the overthrow of Machado but also "to promote a thorough cleansing of the system," they announced: "We do not want a hasty solution, which in the end will detract from the program we originally laid down."<sup>11</sup>

#### UNITED STATES MEDIATION

Despite this array of antagonism, preparations for the mediation went steadily forward. On July 1 conferences were formally inaugurated. Representatives of both the government and the Opposition met with Ambassador Welles, but at different hours. The government was represented by Dr. Octavio Averhoff, Secretary of the Treasury; General Alberto Herrera, Secretary of War and Navy and Acting Secretary of State;<sup>12</sup> and Dr. Mario Ruiz Mesa, Congressman and formerly Secretary of the Treasury. The delegates of the Opposition

were Dr. Joaquín Martínez Saenz, representing the ABC; Nicasio Silverio, the OCRR; Dr. Cosme de la Torriente, the *Unión Nacionalista*; Dr. Rafael Santos Jiménez, the *Marianistas*; Dr. Wifredo Albanés, the orthodox Conservatives;<sup>13</sup> Dr. Manuel Dorta Duque, the University professors; Dr. Gustavo Aragón, the faculties of the Havana and Matanzas institutes; Dr. Carlos Piñeyro and Sra. María Coromina de Hernández, the Havana normal schools; and Srta. Hortensia Lamar, the women of the Opposition.

Mr. Welles read to the delegates a message from President Roosevelt expressing gratification at the peaceful discussions which were being initiated, and declaring that "restoration of political peace is a necessary and preliminary step on the way to Cuba's economic recovery." The message stated that "the moral support of the American people" was behind the attempt at a peaceful solution of Cuba's problems. The Ambassador himself declared: "It is the fervent hope of the government I represent that through this opportunity a solution of the present political problems in accordance with constitutional procedure may be found."<sup>14</sup> Mr. Welles subsequently stated that the objective of the negotiations, "with which President Machado personally assured me he was fully in accord, was the revision of the Constitution of the Republic in such manner as to permit the election of an impartial Vice President acceptable to all factions and the resignation of President Machado in his favor as soon as that step could be taken."<sup>15</sup> On July 8 the scope of representation in the proceedings was somewhat enlarged when Mr. Welles, apparently cooperating with President Machado, invited the three old parties to name commissions of five members each.<sup>16</sup>

9. On August 3 the Student Directorate ordered the withdrawal of the two representatives which it had appointed to the "Directive Cell" of the ABC. Peraza, *Crímenes y horrores de un régimen* (Havana, Cultural, 1933), p. 315. This conflict regarding mediation which divided the ABC and the students—the two groups most sincerely committed to economic and political reconstruction—was to be intensified by later events and to prove a tragic handicap in the subsequent development of the revolution. The ABC supported the Céspedes government, with the students in opposition; under Grau the situation was reversed. Energies which might have been expended in constructive reform were frittered away in partisan warfare. For a summary of the reform program advocated by the ABC, cf. Buell, "The Caribbean Situation: Cuba and Haiti," cited; for that of the students, cf. *Diario de la Marina*, August 24, 1933.

10. *New York Times*, July 6, 1933.

11. *Alma Mater* (Tampa, Florida), July 17, 1933, also *New York Times*, July 16, 1933. On June 24 the students of the Havana Institute, or government high school, who at first had accepted the mediation, changed their attitude and notified Mr. Welles of their opposition to his program. *New York Times*, June 25, 1933. However, members of both the University and Institute student directorates privately declared they would not actively oppose the mediation.

12. Dr. Orestes Ferrara had resigned the office of Secretary of State and left the island on May 29 to attend the London Economic Conference as head of the Cuban delegation. He did not return to Havana until August 9, 1933.

13. The Conservative party was divided into two wings. The "orthodox" group had refused to support Machado in the *Cooperativismo* movement. Two prominent Congressmen of this wing, Miguel Angel Aguiar and Gonzalo Freyre de Andrade, were assassinated in 1932 by Machado agents. The group backed the mediation despite the opposition of General Menocal.

14. *New York Herald Tribune*, July 2, 1933.

15. Welles, *Relations between the United States and Cuba*, cited, p. 7. For the text of the final program of constitutional reforms elaborated by the Opposition, cf. *El Mundo* (Havana), July 23, 1933.

16. *Havana American News*, July 12, 1933; *New York Herald Tribune*, July 9, 1933. This move was resented by the Opposition groups, whose hostility to the three parties which had supported Machado was evidenced as late as November 30, 1934, when the Mendieta government issued a decree abolishing the parties and prohibiting the use of their emblems or insignia. *New York Times*, December 1, 1934.



The representatives of the Opposition presented to Mr. Welles three classes of demands.<sup>17</sup> The first related to measures deemed necessary to assure a favorable atmosphere for the mediation, and included immediate re-establishment of constitutional guarantees, suppression of the press censorship, freedom for political prisoners, complete abrogation of the law of military jurisdiction of September 1932,<sup>18</sup> respect of judicial decisions by the executive authorities, reorganization of existing political parties, and opportunity to organize new parties.

The second class of demands related to "basic questions of the mediation itself," and comprised immediate retirement of the President by means of a leave of absence (*licencia*), his written resignation to be available for acceptance at an opportune time; substitution of the President by a Secretary of State—"honorable, impartial and removed from the political struggle"—who would bring about a complete change in the cabinet; and finally, the withdrawal (*cesación*) of all members of the existing Congress.

The third class of demands referred to constitutional changes, particularly to abrogation of the 1928 amendments, and demanded restoration of the office of Vice President, reduction of elective periods to four years, maintenance of the principle of no re-election, more effective protection of individual rights, and other reforms, including establishment of woman's suffrage.<sup>19</sup> On their side, the Opposition representatives bound themselves to prevent any act of hostility against the government on the part of the groups they represented. This guarantee, however, did not bind factions which took no part in the negotiations.

The government moved promptly to satisfy the Opposition's demands for guarantees. On July 6 Secretary of War Herrera announced that all prisoners at the Isle of Pines had been freed and that all other prisoners would soon be released. The following day government delegates in the mediation proceedings promised full protection to all those Opposition factions participating in the Welles negotiations, both for the mediation period and for 30 days thereafter, should the negotiations break

down. Complete constitutional guarantees, however, were not formally restored until July 26.

Although these steps served to relieve political tension, the outcome of the mediation was endangered by a succession of difficulties. The most serious occurred on July 25 with the approval by the Cuban Congress of two amnesty bills. The first law pardoned all political offences committed since January 1, 1927, either by Opposition or government representatives.<sup>20</sup> The second specifically covered offenses connected with the elections of November 1932. The ABC and other Opposition groups protested particularly against the first bill, since it signified exemption not only for members of the Opposition but also for government authorities guilty of alleged extra-legal acts of repression.

But underneath surface tension and behind the formal mediation discussions of constitutional reform, the fundamental question for both government and Opposition concerned Machado's continuance in power. Uncertainty on this point was alarming the government and creating widespread uneasiness and skepticism within Opposition ranks. On July 18 ABC leaders held an important conference with Mr. Welles,<sup>21</sup> in which they endeavored to secure from him a clear statement of the point at issue. The Ambassador diplomatically avoided all attempts to draw him into definite promises or prophecies, but did declare that if an agreement were concluded, it was his government's policy to support the fulfillment of such a pact. He also expressed the belief that individuals who might be an "obstacle" to the settlement sought should be set aside.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, the Machado régime also was concerned about Mr. Welles' powers and purposes. Did his program for the restoration of political tranquillity and economic stability in Cuba involve the withdrawal of the President or not? If it did, how far was the Ambassador prepared to go to force that withdrawal? Was it true, as the State Department had declared on June 16, that Mr. Welles would act in the mediation only in his personal capacity and not as an official United States representative?<sup>23</sup> Or could he count on Washing-

17. Previously, leaders of the ABC had handed to Mr. Welles a memorandum in which they stated that to initiate the mediation, it was essential to conclude an armistice ending political arrests and the search of dwellings occupied by members of the Opposition. Should the mediation fail, moreover, they asked for the maintenance during a period of 30 days of all constitutional guarantees, to safeguard the welfare of Opposition representatives. *El ABC en la Mediación*, cited, pp. 41-43.

18. This law authorized the trial of political offenders by military courts. *Gaceta Oficial*, September 13, 1932 (hereafter cited as *Gaceta*).

19. *El ABC en la Mediación*, cited, pp. 47-48.

20. The decree extended general amnesty to all who had been indicted (*enjuiciado*) or condemned for acts "committed by motive or occasion of the revolutionary movement, or opposition or terrorist propaganda, or of their prevention or repression." Cf. *Diario de la Marina*, July 25, 1933.

21. For a complete stenographic version of this conversation, cf. *El ABC en la Mediación*, cited, pp. 57-80.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 64, 67, 70.

23. *New York Times*, June 17, 1933. It has been subsequently alleged by Machado supporters that President Roosevelt's message to the mediation delegates, read by Mr. Welles at the meeting on July 1, was in fact an effective contradiction of the Washington declaration of June 16.

ton's full support in his activities? This point was of primary importance to the Machado régime. If the latter were true, Machado would either have to accept the proposals of the mediator, including possibly a demand for his own resignation, or expose his government to the risk of coercive pressure and possible intervention. At this moment, however, the government apparently felt sure that intervention was not imminent.

#### WELLES VS. MACHADO

On July 26 President Machado openly challenged the authority of Mr. Welles in the mediation proceedings.<sup>24</sup> That afternoon the President made an unexpected visit to the Senate, his first in more than two years. After thanking the Senators for their prompt action on the amnesty law, he declared: "I wish to speak also of the mediation work of Mr. Sumner Welles. The reason which I have had for accepting the mediation is clear, because it was directed toward the re-establishment of peace. It cannot be believed that the mediation of Mr. Welles lessens our sovereignty, because his cooperation is of his own free will and does not obey instructions or commands of the Government of the United States. If it were otherwise, I would have ceased to be President before accepting it."<sup>25</sup>

The following day, July 27, when the delegates of the Opposition met for the first time as a Mixed Commission with those of the government,<sup>26</sup> Mr. Welles took advantage of the occasion to answer the Machado declaration. Up to this time he had apparently attempted to safeguard the authority of the President, possibly on the ground that Congress was likely to prove more unruly than Machado in its attitude toward a political compromise and that approval could most easily be secured through executive pressure on the legislature.<sup>27</sup>

24. Machado originally accepted the mediation, it is alleged, in the expectation that it would reveal the lack of unity and discipline in the Opposition groups. When this hope was disappointed and the prestige of his opponents seemed in the ascendant, he attempted to wreck the proceedings.

25. Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo Cayó el Presidente Machado*, cited, p. 112. On this same date the personal representatives of President Machado in the mediation—Herrera, Averhoff and Ruiz Mesa—formally withdrew from the negotiations, announcing the completion of the task for which they had been chosen. From this time on the government was represented only by the delegates of the political parties. *Havana American News*, July 26, 1933.

26. The ABC refused to be represented in this Commission. Cf. *El ABC en la Mediación*, cited, pp. 118-30.

27. In the mediation discussions on constitutional reform, the most critical point concerned the attempt to shorten the existing terms of Senators, Congressmen and other elected officials. The Opposition desired the immediate retirement of these functionaries and the prompt calling of new elections. Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo Cayó el Presidente Machado*, cited, p. 103.

But Machado's challenge was too direct to be ignored. In addressing the delegates, Mr. Welles first voiced appreciation of President Machado's reference to him as "a friend of Cuba," and then continued: "But in my official capacity here I am likewise the Ambassador of a nation which is the closest friend that the Republic of Cuba possesses, and I am the representative of the President of the United States, who is deeply interested in Cuba's welfare."<sup>28</sup>

#### GENERAL STRIKE BRINGS ON CRISIS

Meanwhile, a strike movement had begun which was to play an important rôle in the fall of Machado. On July 25 Havana omnibus drivers ceased work in protest against heavy taxes imposed by José Izquierdo, Machado appointee as Mayor of the capital. A bloody clash between the strikers and police on August 1 brought truck and taxi drivers to the support of the movement, and its ranks were soon swelled by street-car workers, stevedores and newspaper employees. Transportation was tied up both in the capital and throughout the country; Havana newspapers suspended publication. President Machado, absent on a fishing trip, hurried back to the capital. By August 5 the strike, under the direction of the National Confederation of Labor and the Havana Labor Federation, had been transformed from a limited economic movement into a political crusade openly anti-governmental in character. Commerce and industry joined forces with labor. Theatres closed and shops, stores and factories lay silent behind heavy iron shutters. Banks and government offices continued to function, but telegraphers and mail carriers voted to strike. The capital, with its streets almost empty, took on the aspect of a deserted city.

Although the ABC had been active in extending the general strike and had appealed to the workers for support of the movement, it presented to Mr. Welles on August 5 a memorandum charging the government with responsibility. In view of the dangers of the situation, it demanded immediate

28. *New York Times*, July 28, 1933. Official announcements from Washington had previously veiled the exact extent of Mr. Welles' powers, in the evident hope of avoiding embarrassment to the United States and an affront to Cuban susceptibilities. On the one hand, the Roosevelt administration had already pledged itself to a "good neighbor" policy. On the other, it was under pressure to adopt an aggressive program for liquidating the Cuban problem. Doubts which continued to prevail in Cuban government circles concerning the exact powers of the Ambassador were reported due in part to the failure of the Cuban Ambassador, Oscar B. Cintas, to provide his government with adequate and accurate information on the attitude of Washington.

solution of the political problem by Machado's acceptance of a leave of absence.<sup>29</sup>

The government called a special session of Congress for August 7 to consider the declaration of martial law. That same afternoon Mr. Welles informed foreign correspondents that leaders of various factions had accepted his suggested solution for the political problems—a solution which called for the withdrawal of Machado. These leaders included not only Opposition but also Liberal and Conservative representatives, as well as important congressional chiefs. He added that if his formula were not adopted he would view island conditions as grave indeed, and could not foresee what might happen.<sup>30</sup>

At 4 o'clock, shortly after the Welles announcement, a report that Machado had resigned was broadcast, allegedly from a radio station of the ABC Radical. The news spread like wildfire, and in a trice the streets of Havana were clogged with cheering multitudes. The police tried vainly to disperse the manifestation, but by 7 o'clock a crowd of several thousand persons was headed toward the Capitol and the presidential palace. Police officials and *porristas*, ordered to disperse the demonstration, fired on the crowds, killing at least a score and wounding more than a hundred.<sup>31</sup> That same evening Congress approved the suspension of constitutional guarantees throughout the entire island for a period of 30 days; and President Machado, in a radio address, urged Cubans "to defend the Republic's independence at all cost."

This massacre, which called forth widespread condemnation, undoubtedly stiffened Washington's attitude and stimulated demands that Machado withdraw at once. The two props remaining to the dictatorship were the political parties and the army. If the President were to be overthrown without intervention, it was obvious that these supports must be weakened.

#### DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE EMPLOYED

Definite efforts were made by Mr. Welles, according to Dr. Ferrara, to influence political leaders. Ferrara states: "On the morning of August 8 Señor Alberto Barreras, president of the Cuban Senate; Señor Barceló, governor of Santiago de Cuba and president of the Liberal party, and later, Dr. Juan Rodríguez Ramírez and Dr. José Eguillor, members of the Liberal party in the mediatory

commission, saw the American Ambassador. In these separate interviews, the Ambassador said to each one: 'I have here the fate of Cuba [pointing to his pockets]. The President of the United States can wait no longer. There still remain a few hours in which Cuba can be saved. Make an effort to save the republic.'"<sup>32</sup>

On the morning of August 8 Ambassador Welles called formally on President Machado and presented him with the following note:<sup>33</sup>

"Proposition of the Mediator, as a just and reasonable solution of the Cuban problem.

"1. That the President of the Republic name immediately a Secretary of State, an impartial person who has no relation to political activity and who has the confidence of all factions.

"2. That immediately after the Senate confirms that appointment, the President request a leave of absence from Congress, said leave of absence to continue until the Vice-President takes office.

"3. Immediately after the Vice-President takes office, the President of the Republic shall resign, permitting the Vice-President to continue in the position of President of the Republic, from that date until May 20, 1935.

"4. To the Secretary of State, who is to be designated in this manner and who may well be the same person chosen for Vice-President, shall be immediately given ample power to reorganize the cabinet, giving representation to all the important groups of the Republic, making the cabinet of truly national character."

The note also demanded that the terms of office of both Representatives and Senators, which had been extended by the 1928 amendments to the constitution, be so shortened that these officials would leave office in 1935.<sup>34</sup>

Mr. Welles informed the President orally that the proposal should be accepted and acted upon within 48 hours.<sup>35</sup> This demand and the four-fold repetition in the note of the word "immediately" gave it the character of an ultimatum, according to Machado's supporters. When Machado refused to accede at once to the demand for his resignation, Ferrara charges that Mr. Welles threatened him with the following words: "The President of the United States cannot wait longer. If you refuse to

29. *El ABC en la Mediación*, cited, pp. 133-36.

30. *New York Times*, August 8, 1933.

31. *New York Times* and *New York Herald Tribune*, August 8, 1933; *Diario de la Marina*, August 13, 1933.

32. Ferrara, *Philadelphia Sunday News*, cited, p. 25. Cf. also *La Prensa* (New York), April 15, 1935, and Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo Cayó el Presidente Machado*, cited, p. 145.

33. For a description of the atmosphere of this visit, cf. Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo Cayó el Presidente Machado*, cited, pp. 146-51.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 148-49.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 215; also Ferrara, *Philadelphia Sunday News*, cited.



resign, I shall communicate with him and the consequences will be very grave for Cuba."<sup>36</sup>

With the general strike gripping the country, and Washington openly hostile, Machado fought desperately to find some escape from the cordon which was fast tightening around him. Throughout the strike the government had maintained contact with labor leaders, and on August 8 the Communist-led National Confederation of Labor, in return for a promise from Machado to recognize the legality of that organization, release all imprisoned workers and grant other demands, ordered the workers back to their jobs. This command, however, was opposed by the Havana Federation of Labor and was not heeded by the strikers.<sup>37</sup>

The news that the strike had been ended, however, was cited by Cuban Ambassador Cintas when he conferred with President Roosevelt at Hyde Park on August 9. But that same day the Spanish Ambassador and the British Minister in Havana interviewed Ambassador Welles concerning injuries which their nationals were suffering as a result of Cuban disorders; while in Washington the Japanese and Italian Ambassadors visited the State Department to express their concern over events in the island.<sup>38</sup>

The following day at noon Ambassador Welles presented to Dr. Ferrara a copy of a cable from the State Department relative to the Roosevelt-Cintas interview. It reported that President Roosevelt had called for Machado's resignation, declaring that the latter had an opportunity of going down in history as a great leader, a great man and a great patriot if he would adopt the step suggested by representatives of all the Cuban political parties. The document also expressed full presidential support for Welles, declaring that Mr. Roosevelt had informed Ambassador Cintas that Mr. Welles was then acting and had been acting at Havana with

his fullest approval and authorization. President Roosevelt added that there was no desire on the part of the United States to intervene, but that it was this government's duty to do what it could to prevent chaos or starvation among the Cuban people.

#### MACHADO'S LOSS OF POLITICAL SUPPORT

Although Mr. Welles had stated on August 7 that both Liberal and Conservative leaders accepted his formula calling for Machado's withdrawal, the Executive Committee of the Liberal party voted on August 10 to "reject the courteous invitation of the Mediator, as threatening public interests and violating Cuban rights." On the same day the Joint Parliamentary Committee of Conservative Senators and Representatives declared that it had always been opposed to foreign intervention and that "neither this Parliamentary Committee nor the Party has at any time requested the President to shorten his term."<sup>39</sup> The Committee added, however, that it had accepted the Welles mediation without any mental reservations and that it was "disposed to support any sacrifices whatsoever, necessary to re-establish normalcy in Cuba and cordiality in the Cuban family, within respect for the sovereignty of the Republic." The Popular party on August 9 adopted an equivocal position. While it expressed antagonism to any proceeding which might infringe the independence of the republic, it supported the constitutional reforms approved by the Mediation Commission, including shortening of legislators' terms of office.<sup>40</sup>

Such declarations at best fell far short of the support desired by Machado. Late in the afternoon of August 11, through his Secretary of State, he notified Ambassador Welles that he would withdraw from power and comply with the terms of the "ultimatum."<sup>41</sup> This offer was accompanied by a counter-proposal incorporating the measures which the government considered indispensable if chaos were to be avoided in Cuba. It suggested that on Machado's withdrawal he should be succeeded by the Secretary of State, who would be free to choose a new cabinet according to his own wishes. Constitutional reforms were to be approved

36. *La Prensa*, April 15, 1935. According to Lamar Schweyer, in a conversation between Ferrara and Welles the latter denied that the note of April 8 was an ultimatum or that he had threatened intervention to any one. "I am glad," Ferrara replied. "Then the mediation still exists. Now, as a mediator, you cannot offer solutions. You can only harmonize the wills of the two parties, and I do not know that they are in agreement on that." Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo Cayó el Presidente Machado*, cited, pp. 161-62.

37. Cf. IV Congreso Nacional Obrero de Unidad Sindical, *Resoluciones y acuerdos sobre la estructura orgánica de la CNOG* (Havana, 1934), p. 11, and Sandalio Junco, *Fuera Caretas* (Havana, 1934), p. 14. Subsequently the National Confederation of Labor admitted its error, alleging that it had failed to appreciate the true character of the general strike, assuming it was purely economic rather than political as well. For a reference to the series of interviews between government and labor representatives, cf. "La Espada Rota," *El Liberal* (New York), May 20, 1935, p. 6.

38. *New York Times*, August 10, 1933.

39. Ferrara, *Philadelphia Sunday News*, cited, p. 25; and Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo Cayó el Presidente Machado*, cited, pp. 153-59. On the other hand, the president of the Conservative party, Pedro Goderich, was reported as having expressed acceptance of the Welles formula and called on President Machado for "an appropriate patriotic gesture" for the good of the nation. Cf. *New York Times*, August 11, 1933.

40. Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo Cayó el Presidente Machado*, cited, and Ferrara, *Philadelphia Sunday News*, cited.

41. *Ibid.*



within 15 days, and a constitutional convention promptly summoned. The new Magna Carta should guarantee respect for universal suffrage, full national sovereignty, and equality of rights without racial distinction. Although shortened terms for legislators were approved, the rights of Congressmen, government office holders and the armed forces were to be respected. The United States was to extend financial aid to Cuba for the payment of back salaries to government employees, approve a new reciprocity treaty which would reduce American duties on Cuban products by 50 per cent, and modify the Permanent Treaty in the sense that no future interventions should be authorized except those permitted by international law.<sup>42</sup>

#### ARMY TURNS AGAINST MACHADO

Unrest was meanwhile growing in the army, which had hitherto been Machado's strongest prop. Since March 1932 Colonel Horacio Ferrer, retired, and Colonel Julio Sanguily<sup>43</sup> had been attempting to foment a movement to bring about the withdrawal of President Machado. They had attempted to gain the support of General Herrera, Secretary of War, and of Colonels Castillo and Cruz Bustillo, commanders respectively of Camp Columbia and Cabaña Fortress, but had met with rebuffs in each case. None the less, their plan won adherents among the younger officers, particularly in Cabaña, the Aviation Corps, and the Matanzas and Santa Clara military districts. The events of the first 7 days of August strengthened the trend toward the movement and eventually Colonel Erasmo Delgado, Second Chief of Cabaña Fortress, joined the ranks of the conspirators.

Many officers felt that the position of the army was becoming especially difficult. It had been the strongest support of the dictatorship and its repressive activities had earned for it the cordial hatred of the Opposition groups. Many of its leaders were accused of illegal conduct in carrying out the President's commands. It had been rumored that if Machado's refusal to withdraw should bring on intervention, the army would be dissolved or its numbers sharply curtailed. Machado's resignation, on the other hand, would leave the military at the

mercy of their former enemies. It was important, therefore, that the army itself act decisively against Machado, if it was to continue in favor with the succeeding régime.

On August 9 and 10 the insurgent officers presented demands for Machado's resignation to General Herrera and other chiefs. Herrera, it is reported, promised that the President would leave the country within two days and in return received a pledge from the conspirators to suspend all activities. At the same time, however, the Secretary of War took steps to crush the insurrection. This provoked a counter-movement among the plotters, and on August 11 Coast Artillery Battalion No. 1 seized general staff headquarters at *Castillo de la Fuerza* on the Havana waterfront. The active support of the Aviation Corps stationed near Camp Columbia was pledged by its commander, Captain Torres Menier. Following conferences among loyal army leaders, the rebels were informed that Machado would resign within 48 hours, it being intimated that General Herrera would succeed him.<sup>44</sup>

The aviation rebels, however, were opposed both to the concession to Machado of the 48-hour period, and to the acceptance of General Herrera or any other military substitute. Instead they desired an impartial civilian. These demands Colonel Sanguily carried to a conference with Ambassador Welles, only to return to the Aviation Corps with the report that neither had been accepted. Mr. Welles was reported to have argued that the choice was between Herrera and chaos. The rebels, however, continued to insist; during the night they won the backing of further important military units, including that of strategic Cabaña Fortress. In consequence when Havana awoke on the morning of August 12 the news was broadcast that General Machado had resigned in favor of General Herrera, but that the army demanded the latter be replaced by Dr. Carlos Manuel de Céspedes.<sup>45</sup> The President abandoned the palace at 9:30 a.m. and that afternoon fled the country in an airplane which carried him to Nassau. He left behind his request to Congress for a leave of absence and the decree accepting the resignations of his entire cab-

42. Lamar Schwyer, *Cómo Cayó el Presidente Machado*, cited, pp. 177, 178, 188, 215. This counter-proposal was only verbally outlined to Mr. Welles by Dr. Ferrara on August 11. The Ambassador did not receive it in writing until August 12, two hours after General Machado had left the Palace and an hour before Dr. Ferrara fled the country.

43. Both were Menocal sympathizers. Colonel Ferrer had retired as chief of the Army Medical Department in 1928. For an account of earlier conspiracies in the army, cf. Ricardo Adán y Silva, "Las conspiraciones en el ejército durante la tiranía," *Bohemia* (Havana), August 26, and October 14, 1934.

44. Cf. personal accounts of the revolt by Colonel Horacio Ferrer (*Diario de la Marina*, August 23, 1933), and by Captain Mario Torres Menier (*Bohemia*, February 4 and 11, 1934). Cf. also Peraza, *Crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, cited, pp. 317-19.

45. Mr. Welles has frequently been accused of backing Céspedes as the successor of Machado. Although the evidence is conflicting, many sources declare that General Herrera was the candidate he actually favored. Cf. "El ABC ante la Crisis Cubana," *Diario de la Marina*, September 11, 1933. Céspedes came into the picture when Mr. Welles requested the Opposition groups to give the names of five possible candidates. They suggested Céspedes, Colonel Horacio Ferrer, and three

inct except the Secretary of War, General Herrera.<sup>46</sup> The President's request to Congress read as follows:

"Reasons which I should not explain at this moment lead me to the decision to present a resignation from my office. In accordance with Constitutional requirements I ask now a leave of absence, but I wish to make it a matter of record that my resignation has been offered for consideration at an opportune time. . . ."<sup>47</sup>

Before Congress could meet and pass on this document, thus legalizing the President's withdrawal, General Herrera—at a meeting in his residence attended by Mr. Welles, Dr. Cosme de la Torriente of the Opposition, Colonels Julio Sanguily and Erasmo Delgado of the army, and Dr. Carlos Manuel de Céspedes—had named the latter as his Secretary of State and then resigned the Provisional Presidency. Later in the day a small group of Congressmen and Senators formally granted the leave of absence to Machado and accepted the resignations of his cabinet members.<sup>48</sup>

Thus the army revolt, the general strike and the Welles diplomacy proved to be the three immediate factors which, backed by the almost universal opposition of the Cuban people to continuance of the Machado dictatorship, brought about the fall of that régime. The military revolt was the "efficient cause" for the overturn, but it may be doubted that the army would have rebelled had it not been for fear of intervention produced by Welles' diplomacy. The American threat of intervention was in turn apparently crystallized in large part by

others. Much pressure from Opposition groups was brought to bear on Colonel Horacio Ferrer to become president. He refused, alleging two reasons: first, that if he accepted, the movement would appear a mere barracks revolution; and second, "that the new president should enjoy the entire moral and material support of the United States in order to avoid the danger of armed intervention, since the ambassador of that nation . . . had advised long before the 11th the candidacy of Dr. Carlos Manuel de Céspedes." Cf. Ferrer, *Diario de la Marina*, cited; also *New York Times*, September 23, 1933.

46. The acceptance of the cabinet resignations is found in Decree No. 1155, *Gaceta*, August 12, 1933, *Edición Extraordinaria* No. 20.

47. *Diario de la Marina*, August 13, 1933.

48. Although this act is recorded in *Gaceta*, August 14, 1933, *Edición Extraordinaria* No. 22, well-informed sources allege that the session was never held, since the majority of the legislators were in hiding, but that the minutes were drawn up "unofficially" and signed by Dr. Pedro Goderich, acting as president of the Senate. This session also repealed the provision in Article 8 of the Organic Law of the Executive Power which required that the Secretary of State should have held office for 30 days before becoming Provisional President. The purpose of this move was, of course, to legalize the accession of Céspedes. *Diario de la Marina*, August 13, 1933. For a first-hand description of many of the events of this day by a Machado supporter, cf. Lamar Schweyer, *Cómo Cayó el Presidente Machado*, cited, pp. 195-214.

the general strike movement, which brought with it danger of even more serious social convulsion.

It would appear that Mr. Welles went to Cuba with the hope that his tender of good offices as mediator might bring about an understanding between the forces of the government and the Opposition, and thus lead to a peaceful and constitutional solution of the political problem. The offer of United States economic cooperation was expected to prove a useful lever in attaining this end. Although it was believed that Machado's withdrawal would be essential to any political solution, the American government had apparently not formulated any definite program on this point; it was hoped that President Machado would effect such a withdrawal on his own initiative, as a patriotic gesture in the best interests of Cuba, thus safeguarding his personal prestige and at the same time avoiding the necessity of overt intervention by the United States.

The first stages of the mediation seemed to promise a successful outcome for this policy. But the desperate economic situation of the masses of the people and the impatience of the rank and file of Opposition groups called for immediate action. Once the repression of the dictatorship was relaxed, it proved impossible to control the pent-up forces of protest. The march of events was too rapid to accord adequate time for political negotiations. Machado's challenge to Welles on July 26 called into question the efficacy of the whole procedure of mediation and conciliation and brought to the fore the possibility that Washington might use coercive measures to save its policy from defeat. Then came the general strike and the massacre of August 7, and the United States threw the whole power of its influence into the attempt to oust Machado without delay. The threat of armed intervention was advanced in an effort to avoid the actual use of that weapon—a manoeuvre which the army's revolt crowned with success. Since American diplomatic activities constituted one of the major factors in the overthrow of Machado, it is true to say in that sense that "the revolution was produced as the consequence of the activities of a foreign diplomat."<sup>49</sup> Mr. Welles' triumph in achieving his ends without embarrassing President Roosevelt's "good neighbor" policy by armed intervention in Cuba was widely acclaimed in both the Cuban and the North American press.

49. Jorge Mañach, "Revolution in Cuba," *Foreign Affairs*, October 1933. Dr. Mañach states: ". . . although it is pertinent to attribute to this diplomacy a decisive influence in the process leading to the revolt, it is evident that the final responsibility for this latter pertains to the Cuban Opposition."

## THE CESPEDES REGIME

On the morning of August 13 Carlos Manuel de Céspedes took the oath of office as Provisional President before Supreme Court Justice Juan M. Menocal. Dr. Céspedes had served for a short time in 1925-1926 as Machado's Secretary of State and later had held diplomatic posts in Great Britain and France. But his association with the fallen régime was largely limited to the diplomatic service, from which he had retired a year before. These facts, joined to his reputation for personal integrity, made him acceptable to a considerable section of the Opposition. He also bore an illustrious name, for his father had led the Cuban revolution of 1868 and been named President of the first Cuban government. Many feared, however, that his character was not sufficiently decisive to dominate the turbulent situation which he faced on inauguration.

The Céspedes cabinet represented the most important political groups which had taken part in the mediation. It included two members of the ABC, in the Treasury and Justice portfolios, three representatives of the *Unión Nacionalista*, one of the *Marianistas* and one of the OCRR, in addition to several independent members.<sup>50</sup> The Menocal Conservatives and the students, however, remained outside the government.

Although the disorders attending the fall of the dictatorship led Washington to order three destroyers to Havana, it was emphasized that this was done "with the full knowledge and approval of President Céspedes." President Roosevelt issued a statement which stressed the new régime's semblance of constitutionality, declaring: "The change of government now taking place in Cuba is in entire accord with the recognized constitution and laws of that country and no possible question of intervention or of the slightest interference with the internal affairs of Cuba has arisen or is intended by this precautionary step to protect, if necessary, the lives of American citizens, pending the restoration of normal conditions of law and order by the Cuban authorities."<sup>51</sup>

The new government needed all possible support if it was to cope successfully with the many problems requiring immediate action. Disorder was rife in the capital, where the general strike had stopped all transportation, industry and commerce. Mounting popular sentiment called for thoroughgoing political reorganization to rid the government and its departments of all vestiges of the hated Machado régime, while the misery and poverty of the

masses made it urgent to formulate plans for economic reform. The government was practically bankrupt, and its ability to continue service on the foreign debt was open to serious question.

The news of Machado's downfall on August 12 had brought forth a wave of popular rejoicing. The streets were thronged with jubilant crowds, wildly celebrating the end of the dictatorship. Soon demonstrations of joy gave place to mob reprisals against leading members of the fallen régime. President Machado had escaped to Nassau, Secretary of State Ferrara to Miami, and other prominent figures were in hiding. But leaders of Machado's strong-arm killing squad, the *Porra*, including Colonel Antonio Jiménez, were hunted down and shot in the street. The presidential palace was looted, and a "To Rent" sign hung at the main entrance. In a similar manner the houses of many prominent *Machadistas*—the Ministers of Finance, Public Works and Interior, Senator Wifredo Fernández and numerous Congressmen—were sacked and some of them burned. The offices of the Machado newspaper, *Heraldo de Cuba*, were looted and burned. Members of the army and police made little effort to restrain the activities of the mob and at times took an active part in them.

By August 14, however, after approximately 35 persons had been killed in the capital, the rioting had run its course and Havana returned more or less to normal.<sup>52</sup> On the previous day the transport workers, including the railway brotherhood, omnibus and taxi drivers, and street-car employees had voted to return to work, thus breaking the general strike.<sup>53</sup>

The new government was seriously handicapped by its origin in securing popular confidence. In the first place, it had come into office largely as the result of the mediation and was accused by many groups of bearing a "Made-in-the-United-States-Embassy" label. In the second place, its status was based on the 1928 constitution,<sup>54</sup> containing amendments particularly hateful to the Opposition because they had assured to Machado his second term. Thus the new régime was linked constitu-

52. For a detailed account of the above events, cf. Peraza, *Crímenes y horrores de un régimen*, cited, pp. 319-30. On August 19 Chief of Police Antonio Ainciart, one of Machado's most hated henchmen, shot himself to avoid capture. On the following day an irresponsible mob exhumed his body from the potter's field, hauled it naked in an open truck 15 miles to the National University, and there strung it to an electric light pole.

53. The port workers in Havana, however, continued their walk-out and only returned to their jobs on August 22, when their demands, including recognition of the union, were granted by the employers.

54. Cf. the declaration by President Céspedes that he had taken office in accord with Article 72. *Gaceta*, August 14, 1933, *Edición Extraordinaria* No. 21.

50. The Secretary of War, Demetrio Castillo Pokorny, was considered a *Machadista* by certain Opposition elements.

51. *New York Herald Tribune*, August 14, 1933.



tionally to the fallen dictatorship. Moreover, dissatisfaction was aroused because the government, with its program for the restoration of political and economic "normalcy," did not push more actively the prosecution of Machado officials accused of assassination and corruption, and purge the government offices more thoroughly of all former Machado supporters. General Menocal, who returned to the island on August 20, astutely voiced the popular clamor when he called for the "complete renovation" of Cuba's political structure.<sup>55</sup> On the following day it was reported that the University students and professors, together with the ABC and the OCRR, were urging that the government become frankly revolutionary, do away with Congress and rule by decree. It was feared, however, that this might mean loss of United States recognition.<sup>56</sup>

In an effort to placate this growing opposition, President Céspedes issued a decree on August 24,<sup>57</sup> which repealed the constitutional "reforms" of 1928 and restored in its entirety the constitution of 1901. Congress was declared dissolved and the three justices of the Supreme Court appointed after the beginning of Machado's second term, on May 20, 1929, together with all elective office holders, were removed from office.<sup>58</sup> All international obligations, however, including those contracted after May 20, 1929, were to be observed.

By its action on August 24 the Céspedes government abandoned the constitutional course which Mr. Welles had attempted to chart for it and declared itself openly revolutionary and *de facto*. The return to the 1901 constitution particularly pleased the *Unión Nacionalista*, which had long campaigned

against the 1928 "reforms" and in favor of the 1901 constitution. But it markedly failed to satisfy the newer revolutionary elements, particularly the students and the ABC. These groups regarded the 1901 constitution as an outmoded instrument, representing a discredited political and economic system which the revolution should definitely destroy. They desired the immediate convocation of a constitutional assembly to draw up a new Magna Carta, and the August 24 decree brought them bitter disappointment.

On August 28 the ABC threatened to withdraw its two cabinet representatives unless immediate action were taken to effect constitutional reform. The following day the Havana papers carried a statement from the Student Directorate declaring that it had not accepted nor would accept the restoration of the 1901 constitution, which it considered an "essential element" of the Machado régime. Instead it demanded a convention which "should give shape in a constitution to the new structure which the sovereign people may wish to give to the State."<sup>59</sup> Discipline was so lacking in the army that Colonel Horacio Ferrer, who became Secretary of War on August 30, presented a sharp demand to officers for more effective control over the armed forces. To political strife was added the danger of mounting social unrest. Labor was organizing on a wide scale and strikes were spreading on the sugar plantations of the interior.<sup>60</sup>

Despite these alarming developments, optimism reigned in official circles. President Céspedes declared that his government was supported by "all the political, economic and social elements of the country."<sup>61</sup> Mr. Welles continued conferences with Secretary of the Treasury Martínez Saenz concerning a new reciprocity treaty, and it was announced from Washington that the Ambassador would leave Cuba and return to the United States after September 15.<sup>62</sup>

On the first of September a destructive cyclone swept over western and central Cuba, and President Céspedes left Havana to visit the devastated regions. During his absence an army coup on the night of September 4 overthrew the government. He returned to the capital only to surrender power without resistance to the succeeding régime.

55. *New York Times*, August 21, 1933. It is stated that the Céspedes cabinet, at the time of its fall, had ready for the President's signature decrees providing for the confiscation of the properties belonging to erring Machado office-holders, for the reorganization of the judiciary and for the revocation of the Machado amnesty laws. Cf. "El A.B.C. Ante la Crisis Cubana," cited.

56. *New York Herald Tribune*, August 22, 1933. The amnesty law passed by the Machado government shortly before its fall stood in the way of those who demanded immediate prosecution of every official of the deposed régime. On August 19, moreover, Mr. Welles had declared that "only legal methods and civil tribunals" should be used against former *Machadistas* and added: "I am sure it is evident to all that only through the Constitutional Government, comprised of the executive, legislative and judicial branches, can these steps be taken rapidly." *New York Times*, August 20, 1933.

57. Decree No. 1298, *Gaceta*, August 24, 1933, *Edición Extraordinaria* No. 23.

58. On August 29 eleven Supreme Court Justices, holdovers from the Machado régime, yielded to popular demands for a purge of this governmental branch and presented their resignations, leaving as the sole surviving member of the Court Chief Justice Juan Federico Edelmann, who had won Opposition admiration because of various minority decisions considered adverse to the Machado régime.

59. *Diario de la Marina*, August 29, 1933.

60. The political groups in the government issued an appeal on August 22 to the "Cuban proletariat" in which, while pledging constitutional recognition of the right of "pacific" strikes and the satisfaction of labor's "legitimate aspirations," they declared that for the present strikes would be considered as "counter-revolutionary" in character. *Diario de la Marina*, August 23, 1933.

61. *New York Times*, August 30, 1933.

62. *Ibid.*, August 24, 1933.